

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

AN ELOQUENT DISCOURSE ON THE RESURRECTION.

Easter is Queen of the Sabbaths and holds in Her Hand the Key to All the Cemeteries in Christendom—The Life After Death.

An Easter Jubilee.

Rev. Dr. Talmage preached twice last Sunday in New York—at the Academy of Music and the West Presbyterian Church—on both occasions to crowded audiences. One of the sermons was on the subject of "Easter Jubilee," the text being taken from I. Corinthians xv. 54, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

About 1,800 Easter mornings have wakened the earth. In France for three centuries the almanacs made the year begin at Easter until Charles IX. made the year begin at Jan. 1. In the tower of London there is a royal pay roll of Edward I., on which there is an entry of eighteen pence for 490 colored and pictured Easter eggs, with which the people sported. In Russia slaves were fed and alms were distributed on Easter.

Ecclesiastical councils met at Pontus, at Gaul, at Rome, at Achaia, to decide the particular day, and after a controversy more animated than gracious it decided it, and now through all Christendom in some way the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon or next after March 21 is filled with Easter rejoicing. The royal court of the Sabbath is made up of 52. Fifty-one are princes in the royal household, but Easter is queen. She wears a richer diadem and sways a more jeweled scepter, and in her smile nations are irradiated. We welcome this queenly day, holding high up in her right hand the wreathed orb of Christ's sepulcher and holding high up in her left hand the key to all the cemeteries in Christendom.

My text is an ejaculation. It is spun out of hallogings. Paul wrote right on in his argument about the resurrection and observed all the laws of logic, but when he came to write the words of the text his fingers and his pen and the parchment on which he wrote took fire, and he cried out, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" It is a dreadful sight to see an army routed and dying. They scatter everything valuable on the track. Unwheeled artillery. Hoof of horse on breast of wounded and dying man. You have read of the French falling back from Sedan, or Napoleon's track of 90,000 corpses in the snowbanks of Russia, or of the five kings tumbling over the rocks of Bethorah with their armies, while the storm of heaven and the swords of Joshua's hosts struck them with their fury. But in my text is a worse disaster. It seems that a black giant proposed to conquer the earth. He gathered for his host all the aches and pains and maladies and distempers and epidemics of the ages. He marched them down, drilling them in the northeast wind amid the slash of tempests. He threw up barricades of grave mould. He pitched tent of charnel house. Some of the troops marched with slow tread, commanded by consumptions; some in double quick, commanded by pneumonias. Some he took by long besiegement of evil habit and some by one stroke of the battle ax of casualty. With bony hand he pounded at the doors of hospitals and sick rooms and won all the victories in all the great battlefields of all the five continents. Forward, march, the conqueror of conquerors, and all the generals and commanders in chief, and all presidents and kings and sultans and czars drop under the feet of his war chariot.

The Black Giant's Foe.

But one Christian might his antagonist was born. As most of the plagues and sicknesses and despotisms came out of the east it was appropriate that the new conqueror should come out of the same quarter. Power is given him to awaken all the fallen of the centuries and of all lands and marshal them against the black giant. Fields have already been won, but the last day will see the decisive battle. When Christ shall lead forth his two brigades, the brigade of the risen dead and the brigade of the celestial host, the black giant will fall back, and the brigade from the risen sleepers will take him from beneath, and the brigade of descending immortals will take him from above, and "death shall be swallowed up in victory."

The old brag that threatened the conquest and demolition of the planet has lost his throne, has lost his scepter, has lost his palace, has lost his prestige, and the one word written over all the gates of mausoleum and catacomb and necropolis on cenotaph and sarcophagus, on the lonely cairn of the arctic explorer and on the obelisk of great cathedral, written in capitals of azuleo and calligraphy, written in musical cadence, written in doxology of great assemblages, written on the sculptured door of the family vault, is "victory." Coronal word, embannered word, apocalyptic word, chief word of triumphal arch under which conquerors return. Victory! Word shouted at Culloden and Balaklava and Blenheim, at Megiddo and Solferino, at Marathon, where the Athenians drove back the Medes; at Potiers, where Charles Martel broke the ranks of the Saracens; at Salamis, where Themistocles in the great sea fight confounded the Persians, and at the door of the eastern cavern of chiseled rock where Christ came out through a egress and throttled the king of terrors and put him back in the niche from which the celestial conqueror had just emerged. Aha, when the jaws of the eastern man soleum took down the black giant "death was swallowed up in victory!"

I proclaim the abolition of death. The tid antagonist is driven back into mythology with all the lore about Stygian ferry and Charon with oar and boat. We shall have no more to do with death than we have with the clockwork at a governor's or president's levee. We stop at such clockwork and leave in charge of the servant our overcoat, our overboots, our outward apparel, that we may not be impeded in the brilliant round of the drawing room. Well, my friends, when we go out of this world, we are going to a king's banquet, and to a reception of monarchs, and at the door of the tomb we leave the cloak of flesh and the wrappings with which we meet the storms of the world. At the close of our earthly reception, under the brush and broom of the porter, the coat or hat may be handed to us better than when we resigned it, and the cloak of humanity will finally be returned to us improved and brightened and perfumed and scented. You and I do not want our bodies returned to us as they are now. We want to get rid of all their new-

nesses, and all their susceptibilities to fatigue, and all their slowness of locomotion. They will be put through a chemistry of soil and heat and cold and changing seasons, out of which God will reconstruct them as much better than they are now as the body of the rosiest and healthiest child that bounds over the lawn is better than the sickest patient in the hospital.

As to the Soul.

But as to our soul, we will cross right over, not waiting for obsequies, independent of obituary, into a state in every way better, with wider room and velocities beyond computation, the dullest of us into companionship with the very best spirits in their very best moods, in the very best room of the universe, the four walls furnished and paneled and pictured and glorified with all the splendors that the infinite God in all ages has been able to invent. Victory!

This view, of course, makes it of but little importance whether we are cremated or sepulchred. If the latter is dust to dust, the former is ashes to ashes. If any prefer incineration, let them have it without caricature. The world may become so crowded that cremation may be universally adopted by law as well as by general consent. Many of the mightiest and best of earth have gone through this process. Thousands and tens of thousands of God's children have been cremated. P. P. Bliss and wife, the evangelist singers, cremated by accident at Ashtabula bridge; John Rogers, cremated by persecution; Latimer and Ridley, cremated at Oxford; Pothinus and Blondina, a slave, and Alexander, a physician, and their comrades, cremated at the order of Marcus Aurelius. At least 100,000 of Christ's disciples cremated, and there can be no doubt about the resurrection of their bodies. If the world lasts as much longer as it has already been built, there perhaps may be no room for the large acreage set apart for resting places, but that time has not come. Plenty of room yet, and the race needs not pass that bridge of fire until it comes to it. The most of us prefer the old way. But whether out of natural disintegration or cremation we shall get that luminous, buoyant, gladsome, transcendent, magnificent, inexplicable structure called the resurrection body, you will have it. I will have it. I say to you to-day, as Paul said to Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

That far-up cloud, higher than the hawk flies, higher than the eagle flies, what is it made of? Drops of water from the Hudson, other drops from East river, other drops from a stagnant pool out on Newark flats. Up yonder there, embodied in a cloud, and the sun kindles it. If God can make such a lustrous cloud out of water drops, many of them solid and impure and fetched from miles away, can he not transport the fragments of a human body from the earth, and out of them build a radiant body? Cannot God, who owes all the material out of which bones and muscle and flesh are made, set them up again if they have fallen? If a manufacturer of telescopes drop a telescope on the floor, and it breaks, can he not mend it again so you can see through it? And if God drops the human eye into the dust, the eye which he originally fashioned, can he not restore it? Aye, if the manufacturer of the telescope, by a change of the glass and a change of focus, can make a better glass than that which was originally constructed and actually improve it, do you not think the fashioner of the human eye may improve its sight and multiply the natural eye by the thousandfold additional forces of the resurrection eye?

Why is the Resurrection Incredible? "Why should it be thought with you an incredible thing that God should raise the dead?" Things all around us suggest it. Out of what grew all these flowers? Out of the mold and earth. Resurrected. Resurrected. The radiant butterfly, where did it come from? The loathsome caterpillar. That albatross that smites the tempest with its wing, where did it come from? A senseless shell. Near Berge- race, France, in a Catholic tomb, under a block, were found flower seeds that had been buried 2,000 years. The explorer took the flower seed and planted it, and it came up, it bloomed in bluebell and bellflower. Two thousand years ago buried, yet resurrected. A traveler says he found in a mummy pit in Egypt garden pens that had been buried three 3,000 years ago. He brought them out, and on June 4, 1844, he planted them, and in thirty days they sprang up. Buried 3,000 years, yet resurrected.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? Where did all this silk come from—the silk that adorns your persons and your homes? In the hollow of a staff a Greek missionary brought from China to Europe the progenitors of those worms that now supply the silk markets of many nations. The progeny of bartered host and the luxurious articles of commercial emporium blazing out from the silkworm! And who shall be surprised if out of this insignificant earthly life our bodies unfold into something worthy of the coming eternity? Put silver into diluted niter, and it dissolves. Is the silver gone forever? No. Put in some pieces of copper, and the silver reappears. If one force dissolves, another force reorganizes.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? The insects sew and the worms crawled last autumn feebler and feebler, and then stopped. They have taken no food; they want none. They lie dormant and insensible, but soon the south wind will blow the resurrection trumpet, and the air and the earth will be full of them. Do you not think that God can do as much for our bodies as he does for the wasps, and the spiders, and the snails? This morning at half past 4 o'clock there was a resurrection. Out of the night, the day. In a few weeks there will be a resurrection in all our gardens. Why not some day a resurrection amid all the graves? Ever and anon there are instances of men and women entranced. A trance is death, followed by resurrection after a few days. Total suspension of mental power and voluntary action.

Suspended Animation.

Rev. William Tennent, a great evangelist of the last generation, of whom Dr. Archibald Alexander, a man far from being sentimental, wrote in most eulogistic terms—Rev. William Tennent seemed to die. His spirit seemed to have departed. People came in day after day and said: "He is dead. He is dead." But the soul does not die. Rev. William Tennent lived to write out experiences of what he had seen while his soul was gone. It may be found some time that what is called suspended animation, or comatose state, is brief death, giving the soul an excursion into the next world, from which it comes back

—a fortnight of a few hours granted from the conduct of life to which it must return.

Do not this waking up of men from trance and this waking up of grains buried 3,000 years ago make it easier for you to believe that your body and mine, after the vacation of the grave, shall rouse and rally, though there be 3,000 years between our last breath and the sounding of the archangelic reveille? Physiologists tell us that, while the most of our bodies are built with such wonderful economy that we can spare nothing, and the loss of a finger is a hindrance, and the injury of a toe joint makes us lame, still we have two or three apparently useless physiological apparatus, and no anatomist or physiologist has ever been able to tell what they are good for. Perhaps they are the foundation of the resurrection body, worth nothing to us in this state, to be indispensably valuable in the next state. The Jewish rabbis appear to have had a hint of this suggestion when they said that in the human frame there was a small bone which was to be the basis of the resurrection body. That may have been a delusion. But this thing is certain—the Christian scientists of our day have found out that there are two or three superfluous of the body that are something gloriously suggestive of another state.

I called at my friend's house one summer day. I found the yard all piled up with rubbish of carpenter's and mason's work. The door was off. The plumbers had torn up the floor. The roof was being lifted in cupola. All the pictures were gone, and the paper hangings were doing their work. All the modern improvements were being introduced into that dwelling. There was not a room in the house fit to live in at that time, although a month before, when I visited that house, everything was so beautiful I could not have suggested an improvement. My friend had gone with his family to the Holy Land, expecting to come back at the end of six months, when the building was to be done. And, oh, what was his joy when, at the end of six months, he returned, and the old house was enlarged and improved and glorified. That is your body. It looks well now. All the rooms filled with health, and we could hardly make a suggestion. But after awhile your soul will go to the Holy Land, and while you are gone the old house of your tabernacle will be entirely reconstructed from cellar to attic. Every nerve, muscle and bone and tissue and artery will be hauled over, and the old structure will be burnt and adorned and raised and cupoled and enlarged, and all the improvements of heaven introduced, and you will move into it on resurrection day.

"For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Oh, what a day when body and soul meet again! They are very fond of each other. Did your body ever have a pain and your soul not re-echo it? Or, changing the question, did your soul ever have any trouble and your body not sympathize with it, growing weak and weak under the depressing influence? Or did your soul ever have a gladness but your body celebrated with it with kindled eye and cheek and elastic step? Surely God never intended two such good friends to be very long separated. And so when the world's last Easter morning shall come the soul will descend, crying, "Where is my body?" and the body will ascend, saying, "Where is my soul?" and the Lord of the resurrection will bring them together, and it will be a perfect soul in a perfect body, introduced by a perfect Christ into a perfect heaven. Victory!

They Fear a Future Life. Only the bad disapprove of the resurrection. A cruel heathen warrior heard Mr. Moffat, the missionary, preach about the resurrection, and he said to the missionary, "Will my father rise in the last day?" "Yes," said the missionary. "Will all the dead in battle rise?" said the cruel chief. "Yes," said the missionary. "Then," said the warrior, "let me hear no more about the resurrection day. There can be no resurrection, there shall be no resurrection. I have slain thousands in battle. Will they rise? Ah, there will be more to rise on that day than those want to see whose crimes have never been repented of. But for all others who allowed Christ to be their pardon and life and resurrection it will be a day of victory. The thunders of the last day will be the salvo that greets you into harbor. The lightnings will be only the torches of triumphal procession marching down to escort you home. The burning words flashing through immensity will be the rockets celebrating your coronation on thrones, where you will reign forever and forever and forever. Where is death? What have we to do with death? As your reunited body and soul swing off from this planet on that last day you will see deep gashes all up and down the hills, deep gashes all through the valleys, and they will be the emptied graves, they will be the abandoned sepulchers, with rough ground tossed on either side of them, and slabs will lie uneven on the rent hillocks, and there will be fallen monuments and cenotaphs, and then for the first time you will appreciate the full exhilaration of the text, "He will swallow up death in victory."

"Hail the Lord of earth and heaven! Praise to Thee by both be given; These we greet triumphant now, Hail the resurrection, Thou!"

Sugar and Muscles.

The fact that sugar is sweet is not its only recommendation as an article of diet. Recent scientific investigation has tended to increase our respect for it as an important factor in the development and nourishment of bodily strength and activity. Indeed, Dr. Vaughan Hardy has lately reported to the Royal Society in London the results of experiments which have led him to the belief that sugar is "the principal factor in the production of muscular energy."

He finds that sugar not only greatly increases the amount of muscular work that can be done, but also postpones the effects of fatigue. When two hundred and fifty grammes of sugar were added to the meals consumed during a day, the work accomplished in eight hours was increased between 22 and 30 per cent. It should not be forgotten, however, that these experiments tell us nothing of the other effects of sugar, and therefore they cannot be quoted as scientific authority for over indulgence in the use of sweets. Use without abuse will always remain the great law of health.

LONGFELLOW'S YOUTH.

He Was Brought Up in an Atmosphere of Culture.

In the first ten years of the nineteenth century there were born in New England five of the foremost authors of America. Emerson and Hawthorne were four and three years older than Longfellow. Whittier and Holmes were respectively ten months and two years younger. As they grew up and began to write and got to know one another these authors became friends; and their friendship lasted with their lives. One after another they all gained fame; and although not the greatest of the five, perhaps, Longfellow was always the most popular. Not merely in the United States and Great Britain, but in Canada and Australia and India and wherever the English language is spoken, there were readers in plenty for the gentle, the manly, the beautiful verses of Longfellow.

His mother's father had been a general in the Revolutionary army. His mother's brother (after whom he was named) had been an officer in the American navy, losing his life in Preble's attack on Tripoli. His father, once a member of Congress, was one of the leading lawyers of Portland. And it was in that pleasant Maine city that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born, on Feb. 27, 1807. There he got that liking for the sea and for ships and for sailors which was to give a salt-water savor to so many of his ballads. There, as he grew to boyhood, he browsed amid the books of his father's ample library, feeling his love for literature steadily growing.

He was a school boy of twelve when the first numbers of Irving's "Sketch-Book" appeared, and he read it "with ever-increasing wonder and delight, spell-bound by its pleasant humor, its melancholy tenderness, its atmosphere of reverie." A few months before the "Sketch-Book" began, Bryant had published his "Thanatopsis," and others of his earlier poems followed soon; so the school boy in Portland came under the influence of Bryant's poetry almost at the same time he felt the charm of Irving's prose. When he was only thirteen the young Longfellow began to write verses of his own, some of which were printed in the newspapers. He was only fourteen when he passed the entrance examinations of Bowdoin College, where he was to have Hawthorne as a classmate.

Long before his college course was over he had made up his mind to become a man of letters. In his last year at Bowdoin, being then eighteen, he wrote to his father: "I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns ardently for it, and every earthly thought centers in it." But here in America, in 1825, no man could hope to support himself by prose and verse. Fortunately, just then a professorship of modern languages was founded in Bowdoin, and the position was offered to Longfellow, with permission to spend several years in Europe fitting himself for his duties. He accepted eagerly; and his journey in France and Spain, in Italy and Germany, made him master of the four great European languages with their marvelous literatures. He studied hard and wrote little while he was away. At last, in 1829, being then twenty-two, he returned to his native land and settled down to teach his fellow-countrymen what he had learned abroad.—St. Nicholas.

The Dominic's Prayer.

Miss Molly Elliot Seawell relates the following anecdote in the course of a sketch of John Paul Jones, in the Century: The landing on St. Mary's Isle thoroughly alarmed the coast, and the name and character of the vessel and her commander were well known. The frigate being seen beating up the Solway toward the "lang town" of Kirkcaldy, the frightened people assembled on the shore, and presently down came their "meenster," the Rev. Mr. Shirra, lugging a huge arm-chair, which he flung down on the shore, and then plumped himself violently into it. He was short of breath, and very angry with the Deity for permitting such doings as Paul Jones'; and, puffing and blowing, he made the following prayer, which tradition has preserved:

"Now, Lord, donna ye think it is a shame for ye to send this vile pirate to rob our folk o' Kirkcaldy? For ye ken they are poor enough already, and hae naething to spare. They are all fairly gaid, and it wad be a pity to serve them in sic a wa'. The wa' the wind blows, he'll be here in a jiffy, and wha' kens what he may do? He is name too gude for anything. Muckle's the mischief he has done already. Ony pocket gear he has gathered together, he will gang w' the whole o't, and maybe burn their houses, tak' their ca'les, and strip them to their sarks! And wae's me! Wha' kens but the bluidy villain may tak' their lives. The pair women are maist frightened out o' their wits, and the bairns skreeking after them. I canna tho't it! I canna tho't it! I have been long a faithful servant to ye, Lord; but gin ye dinna turn the wind about, and blow the scoundrel out o' our gate, I'll nae stir a foot, but just sit here until the tide comes in and drowns me. Sae tak' your wull o't, Lord!"

The prayer appears to have been effective; for at that very moment the wind changed, and blew "the scoundrel out o' our gate."

Curiosities in Pearls.

The value of pearls has been in all ages commensurate with their beauty. In the East, especially, they have been greatly admired, and enormous sums of money have been paid for them. Pliny observes that pearls are the most valuable and excellent of all precious stones; and from our Savior's comparing the kingdom of heaven to a pearl, it is evident they must have been held in very high estimation at that time.

It is said that Julius Caesar gave a pearl to the mother of Marcus Brutus that was valued at 48,417 pounds and 10 shillings of our present money; and Cleopatra dissolved one worth 250,000 pounds in vinegar, which she drank at the supper with Marc Antony.

From time immemorial there have been fisheries of pearls in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and in the bays of Ceylon; and when Columbus arrived in the Gulf of Paria, on his first voyage to America, he was astonished to find the precious gems abounding there in unparalleled quantities. His men landed, and saw the Indian women adorned with splendid pearls round their arms, as well as round their necks; but their possessors seem to have been perfectly ignorant of the true value of the gems, as it is recorded that an Indian woman gave one of the sailors four rows of her pearls in exchange for a broken earthenware plate.

The Spanish king forbade anyone to go within fifty leagues of the place where such riches were found without the royal permission, and took possession of the fisheries for himself. But so cruelly did the Spaniards behave to the natives, making them per force dive for them, and brutally ill-treating them when they were unsuccessful in pearl finding, that "one morning, at dawn, the Indians assailed the Spaniards, made a sanguinary slaughter of them, and with dancing and leaping ate them, both monks and laymen."

SEALING IN LABRADOR.

Fields Many Miles Square Fairly Teeming with Seals.

Late in February the Newfoundland sealing steamers break through the ice in St. John's harbor, and make their way to some northern outposts, lying there until March 10, the earliest date on which the law allows them to "go to the ice." They stand out to sea until they meet the immense fields of ice from the Arctic Ocean. These fields are often many square miles in extent, and fairly teem with seals. A great seal hunter told me that the sea seemed suddenly converted into an ocean of seals and ice. The steamer breaks into the jam and floats with it or skirts along the edge, the crew, 200 or 300 in number, taking to the floating ice and living there for days and nights.

The young seals fatten so rapidly that sealers say you can actually see them grow while you are looking at them. The poor creatures are easily killed, a blow with the butt end of a gaff finishing them. The hunter then "skulps" or skins them, inserting a sharp knife under the fat, and with marvelous dexterity taking off the "pelt"—skin and half. A party of men will "pan" their pelts—pile them up to the number of about 1,000—and thrust a gaff with the ship's flag into the pan. When there are pans enough, the steamer breaks into the ice and hauls them aboard with a donkey-whinch; or the men drag them to the vessel's side.

The Newfoundland seal-hunters always speak of seals as "swilers," and for our word carry they call "spell." A school-master, who had been listening to a seal-hunter's story, said, sneeringly:

"Swiles! How do you spell swiles?" "We don't spell 'em," replied the hunter; "we most generally haul 'em!"—St. Nicholas.

Romance Ruined.

A young girl friend of mine writes to me from the interior of Pennsylvania to this effect: "Oh, dear, the romance of the country is all in the books, I believe. You know how poetic my fancies are? Well, I came out here to try and feed them after a long course of starvation diet in city society, but it is not a success. The places are nice enough—some of them, at least—but the people—oh, the people! They have no imagination whatever. I was telling my landlord about a pretty little glen I had discovered. When I described it, he said, with a kind of lignum vitae smile:

"Oh, yes, that's Peter Wood's land. No good on earth. He never could raise nothing onto it. Now jest look at that land! And he pointed to his treeless farm, laid out with long rows of cabbage and potatoes, vegetables and what-nots. 'That's sunthin' worth talkin' about now, that is!'

"Oh, yes," I replied; "but I'm speaking of the scenery. The little glen is simply beautiful. I am going to spend half my time there. I've given it such a pretty name, too."

"Shoo!" he remarked, with another wooden grin. "What d'ye call it?"

"Verdure Valley," was my answer. "Isn't it pretty?"

"Durned if it ain't," he rejoined. "Prettier than the name it's always went by."

"And what was that?" was my query.

"Wall, it's allers bin called Skunkweed Holler."

"I am coming home at once."

The Largest Flower.

The Victoria water lily (Victoria Regia) is found in the still waters of the tributaries of the Amazon River, in South America. The leaves of this lily are often 6 feet in diameter, and strong enough to support the weight of a man. The flowers are sometimes 2 feet in diameter. Each flower is separate; it expands at night and is white and fragrant. It closes at daylight, to open again for the last time as the second evening comes on. Then it is pink, and its odor is rank and unpleasant. It expands partly the third evening, showing a deeper red, and then it sinks below the surface of the water.

The Federal Government of Mexico offers a bonus of four cents for every rubber tree planted. In addition to this, the State Government of Oaxaca offers one cent.

One is never more on trial than in the moment of excessive good fortune.

THE STATUS OF RAILROADS.

Dividends Small, Stock Deteriorated, Equipments Run Down, Future Dark.

The status of American railroads is interesting to the student, perhaps a little alarming. Certainly it would be unless for the certainty that an interest so rooted in the public need will right itself in time. The railway business of the country reflects the general industrial depression and suffers honestly under other economic factors of the situation. It is indeed one of the best barometers of prosperity or adversity.

The enormous expansion of the railroad system through sparsely settled territory; the watering of stock for speculative purposes; the centralizing tendency, which has loaded down originally strong roads with additional fixed charges in the absorption of feeders; the fierce competition in rates arising from the paralleling of roads—all these things easily account for the fact that the average American railway dividend is a mere bagatelle. This is indeed only about 2½ per cent, as against 4 per cent in England.

Such is the normal condition of our railway system, if that can be called normal which at its best does not index sound financial health. But the last two years have shown a still greater declension of the vital tone. The sick man is getting worse and the doctors scarcely know what prescription to recommend. The preliminary report of the Interstate Commerce Commission gives some significant revelations about this interesting matter.

The decrease of net earnings for 1893-94 on a mileage of 149,590 miles of road, presumably including the strongest roads in the country, was \$44,555,893 as compared with the preceding year. But the alarming fact underlying these figures in the report is that \$28,254,121 had been paid in dividends in excess of earnings applicable for such payments. One would conclude then that the dividends came from an old surplus or from borrowed money.

It is almost impossible to admit the former conjecture. For the last five years roads have allowed their rolling stocks and roadbeds to run down to the lowest service limit. There have been scarcely any improvements. Hundreds of thousands of cars have been shunted on the cripple tracks unfit for use. The severest economy has been practiced in refraining from any but indispensable expenditure. These facts all railroad and railroad supply men know. No well-administered road unless compelled by the direst need allows its mechanical side to deteriorate. This at once sets aside the presumption of any old surplus, unless railway managers, usually the shrewdest of men, have gone mad.

The other horn of the dilemma is that money has been borrowed not by one corporation, but by many, to pay dividends to stockholders. If this has been done it has been done with the purpose of rigging the stock market not from any motive of philanthropy. Railroad corporations do not deliberately run in debt on the yearly exhibit unless for adequate financial cause.

A more luminous proof of the great depression of railway business can hardly be adduced. We find, too, that even the pooling arrangements entered into by the railroads under the most solemn guarantees of good faith are as brittle as glass. They are broken almost as soon as made. It is a matter of life and death with some roads to get enough business to pay expenses. Accordingly many of the roads do not hesitate to break a pledge and offer an undercut to shippers. Necessity knows no law.

There has been ample ground for bitter criticism of railway methods. They have been selfish, overreaching, grasping in the extreme at times. But whatever fault the past justifies, their present state is honestly such as to call for sympathy and assistance, so far as help can be given without doing injustice to other great interests.

Waiting for an Answer. One day a grand postoffice official happened to be passing through a British Government office with which he was not connected. There he saw a man standing before a fire reading a newspaper. Hours after, returning the same way, he was shocked to find the same man, legs extended, before the same fire, still buried in the columns of a newspaper.

"Hailon, sir!" cried the indignant head of the department. "What are you doing?"

"Can't you see what I am doing?" was the answer.

"Sir, I came through this office four hours ago and found you reading the paper; I return, and you are still waiting your time in the same manner."

"Very true; you have stated the case to a nicety."

Hereupon the head of the department naturally fired up.

"What is your name, sir?" he said.

"Well, I don't know that my name is any affair of yours—what is your name?"

"Sir, I would have you to know that I am the so-and-so of the postoffice."

"Indeed! Well, I am very glad to hear it. I am, sir, simply one of the public, who has been kept waiting here four hours for an answer to a simple question, and I shall be much obliged if you will use your influence to get me attended to."

Not in His Line. Mrs. Hicks—Your teacher says she saw you fighting with Tommy Higgins, a boy much younger than yourself.

Dick Hicks—Well, if she expects to see me plugging any old professional swatters she's going to get left.—Exchange.

All the Same. Bings—What did you give me this key for? It ain't my latch-key.

Mrs. Bings—You won't have any more trouble with that key than you usually do.—New York World.